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ABSTRACT

Staff who bring a mental health perspective to the schools can deal with problems of staff burnout. This packet is designed to help in beginning the process of minimizing burnout, a process that requires reducing environmental stressors, increasing personal capabilities, and enhancing job supports. The packet opens with brief discussions of "What Causes Burnout" and "Addressing the Burnout Problem: What the Stress Management Literature Tells Us," excerpts from three articles from an issue of "Human Relations" (v49 n2 1996). "A Quick Overview of Some Basic Resources" presents 21 selected references, a description of some resources available from the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), resource aids on "Person-Coping Techniques" and "Bouncing Back from Burnout," and lists of agencies, organizations, advocacy groups, and Internet resources. This section also describes model programs as examples of burnout reduction approaches, and it lists experts from the consultation cadre of the Center for Mental Health in Schools. A sample ERIC digest, "Urban School Restructuring and Teacher Burnout," provides a brief research synthesis on burnout prevention. A final selection in this packet is excerpted from "Compassion Fatigue: When Listening Hurts" by Randall Edwards (an article in the "APA Monitor," September 1995), a discussion of the ways psychologists must take care of their own needs to avoid burnout. (SLD)

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ED 425 241

*From the Center's Clearinghouse ...**

An introductory packet on

Understanding and Minimizing Staff Burnout

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Under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project in the Department of Psychology at UCLA, our center approaches mental health and psychosocial concerns from the broad perspective of addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. Specific attention is given policies and strategies that can counter fragmentation and enhance collaboration between school and community programs.

MISSION: ***To improve outcomes for young people by enhancing policies, programs, and practices relevant to mental health in schools.***

Through collaboration, the center will

- **enhance practitioner roles, functions and competence**
- **interface with systemic reform movements to strengthen mental health in schools**
- **assist localities in building and maintaining their own infrastructure for training, support, and continuing education that fosters integration of mental health in schools**

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*In 1996, two national training and technical assistance centers focused on mental health in schools were established with partial support from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Office of Adolescent Health. As indicated, one center is located at UCLA; the other is at the University of Maryland at Baltimore and can be contacted toll free at 1-(888) 706-0980.

(6/98)

What is the Center's Clearinghouse?

The scope of the Center's Clearinghouse reflects the School Mental Health Project's mission -- to enhance the ability of schools and their surrounding communities to address mental health and psychosocial barriers to student learning and promote healthy development. Those of you working so hard to address these concerns need ready access to resource materials. The Center's Clearinghouse is your link to specialized resources, materials, and information. The staff supplements, compiles, and disseminates resources on topics fundamental to our mission. As we identify what is available across the country, we are building systems to connect you with a wide variety of resources. Whether your focus is on an individual, a family, a classroom, a school, or a school system, we intend to be of service to you. Our evolving catalogue is available on request; eventually it will be accessible electronically over the Internet.

What kinds of resources, materials, and information are available?

We can provide or direct you to a variety of resources, materials, and information that we have categorized under three areas of concern:

- Specific psychosocial problems
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Among the various ways we package resources are our *Introductory Packets, Resource Aid Packets, special reports, guidebooks*, and *continuing education units*. These encompass overview discussions of major topics, descriptions of model programs, references to publications, access information to other relevant centers, organizations, advocacy groups, and Internet links, and specific tools that can guide and assist with training activity and student/family interventions (such as outlines, checklists, instruments, and other resources that can be copied and used as information handouts and aids for practice).

Accessing the Clearinghouse

- E-mail us at **smhp@ucla.edu**
- FAX us at (310) 206-8716
- Phone (310) 825-3634
- Write School Mental Health Project/Center for Mental Health in Schools, Dept. of Psychology, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563

Check out recent additions to the Clearinghouse on our Web site
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All materials from the Center's Clearinghouse are available for a minimal fee to cover the cost of copying, handling, and postage. Eventually, we plan to have some of this material and other Clearinghouse documents available, at no-cost, on-line for those with Internet access.

If you know of something we should have in the clearinghouse, let us know.

Understanding and Minimizing Staff Burnout

The person-environment fit model of job stress holds that two kinds of fit exist between the individual and the work environment. The first involves the exten: to which the person's skills and abilities match the demands and requirements of the job. The second type of fit involves the extent to which the environment provides for individual's needs. If a mismatch occurs involving either kind, the individual's well-being is threatened, and various health strains may result.

Bruce and West, 1996

I feel like an emotional sponge, wrung out, with nothing left but still being squeezed.

Gary Kaplan, Psychologist

This introductory packet contains:

- Preface
- A Brief Discussion of: • *What Causes Burnout*
  • *Addressing the Burnout Problem*
- A Quick Overview of Some Basic Resources
  - Selected References
  - Resource Aids : • *Person-Coping Techniques*
    • *Bouncing Back From Burnout*
  - Agencies, Organizations, Advocacy Groups, and Internet Resources
  - Some Model Programs
  - Consultation Cadre who are willing to help
- A Sample ERIC Digest from the ERIC Clearinghouse
  A Brief Research Syntheses on *Burnout Prevention*
- Excerpts from the a document entitled
  "Compassion Fatigue: When Listening Hurts"

In his book on the *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy* (1996), Gerald Corey gives this answer to the question

What is Burnout?

What is burnout? I have heard counselors complain that they are just going through the motions of their job. They feel that whatever they are doing makes no difference at all and that they have nothing left to give. Some of these practitioners have convinced themselves that this feeling of burnout is one of the inevitable hazards of the profession and that there is not much they can do to revitalize themselves. This assumption is lethal, for it cements the feeling of impotence and leads to a giving up of hope. Equally bad are those practitioners who do not realize that they are burned out.

Burnout manifests itself in many ways. Those who experience this syndrome typically find that they are tired, drained, and without enthusiasm. They talk of feeling pulled by their many projects, most of which seem to have lost meaning. They feel that what they do have to offer is either not wanted or not received; they feel unappreciated, unrecognized, and unimportant, and they go about their jobs in a mechanical and routine way. They tend not to see any concrete results of the fruits of the efforts . Often they feel oppressed by the "system" and by institutional demands, which, they contend, stifle any sense of personal initiative. A real danger is that burnout syndrome can feed off itself, so that practitioners feel more and more isolated. They may fail to reach out to one another and to develop a support system. Because burnout can rob us of the vitality we need personally and professionally, it is important to look at some of its causes, possible remedies, and ways of preventing it.

Preface

Anyone who works in schools knows about burnout. Staggering workloads, major problems, and endless hassles are the name of the game. The many frustrations, large and small, affect staff (and student) morale and mental health. As with so many problems, if ignored, burnout takes a severe toll. Rather than suffer through it all, staff who bring a mental health perspective to schools can take a leadership role to address the problem.

> Any focus on minimizing burnout at a school site begins with an appreciation of the causes of burnout. This leads to an understanding that some of the problem arises from environmental stressors and some of the problem stem from characteristics and capabilities individuals bring to the situation. (And, of course, the way the environment and individual mesh is not to be ignored.) These causes play out differently with different roles and functions at a school.

All at a school site share some common stressors, but teachers and pupil service personnel also experience a range of different ones and all personnel differ in the characteristics and capacities they bring to the job.

> Those dealing with students' psychosocial mental health problems over an extended period of time become fatigued because so many of the problems feel terribly intractable. Teachers burnout from the daily pressure of dealing with classrooms full of students who are encountering major barriers to learning.

Ultimately, the problem of minimizing burnout resolves down to

- reducing environmental stressors
- increasing personal capabilities
- enhancing job supports

Easy to say, hard to do.

Hopefully this intro packet will help in beginning the process.

What Causes Burnout?*

Job burnout is "a consequence of the perceived disparity between the demands of the job and the resources (both material and emotional) that an employee has available to him or her. When demands in the workplace are unusually high, it becomes increasingly impossible to cope with the stress associated with these working conditions."

> Its roots are found in the daily transactions stemming from the debilitating physical and emotional overload that arises from stress on the job.

Job burnout is both an occupational hazard and a phenomenon induced by distress. It is generally characterized by: (1) some degree of physical and emotional exhaustion; (2) socially dysfunctional behavior, particularly a distancing and insulation from individuals with whom one is working; (3) psychological impairment -- especially strong, negative feelings toward the self; and (4) organizational inefficiency through decreased output and poor morale.

> In *Job Burnout in Public Education: Symptoms, Causes, and Survival Skills* (1982), Anthony Cedoline offers the following analysis of seven causes of job burnout that have received the most attention in research findings:

Lack of Control Over One's Destiny

> As organizations become large and impersonal, employees are frequently less involved in decision making. Even simple tasks can be delayed due to legal dictates, administrative policy, or lack of funds. Employees' participation in decision making promotes more positive job attitudes and greater motivation for effective performance.

Lack of Occupational Feedback and Communication

> Like other workers, educators want to know the expectations of the organization, the behaviors that will be successful or unsuccessful in satisfying job requirements, any physical and psychological dangers that might exist, and the security of the job. Education employees need feedback to develop job values, aspirations, objectives, and accomplishments. Lack of clear, consistent information can result in distress. If evaluation only happens once or twice a year without regular, periodic feedback, the possibility of stress increases the longer the employee works in a vacuum. Regarding communication, organizational structures that foster open, honest, cathartic expression in a positive and constructive way reap large dividends from employees. When management reacts to open communication on a crisis basis only, it reinforces negative communications.

Work Overload or Underload

> Researchers have found high levels of stress among individuals who have excessive work loads. Long or unpredictable hours, too many responsibilities, work at a too-rapid pace, too many phone calls, dealing directly with difficult people without sufficient relief, dealing with constant crises, and supervising too many people (e.g., large class sizes and overcrowding) or having broad multifaceted job descriptions are characteristics of a work overload. In addition, boring tedious jobs or jobs without variety are equally distressful.

*Excerpts from Job Burnout in Public Education: Symptoms, Causes, and Survival Skills, which was written by Anthony J. Cedoline and published in 1982 by the Teachers College, Columbia University.

Contact Overload

Contact overload results from the necessity for frequent encounters with other people in order to carry out job functions. Some occupations (teaching, counseling, law enforcement) require many encounters that are unpleasant and therefore distressful. These workers spend a large proportion of their work time interacting with people in various states of distress. When the caseload is high, control over one's work and consequent job satisfaction is affected. Contact overloads also leave little occasion or energy for communication and support from other employees or for seeking personal and professional growth opportunities.

Role Conflict/Ambiguity

Although role conflict and ambiguity can occur independently, they both refer to the uncertainty about what one is expected to do at work. Role conflict may be defined as the simultaneous occurrence of two or more opposing pressures such that a response to one makes compliance with the other impossible (e.g., mass education versus individualized instruction). The most frequent role conflicts are (1) those between the individual's values and those of the superior or the organization; (2) the conflict between the demands of the work place and the worker's personal life; and (3) the conflict between worker abilities and organizational expectations. In numerous studies, role conflict has been associated with low job satisfaction, frustration, decreased trust and respect, low confidence in the organization, morale problems and high degrees of stress. Role ambiguity may be defined as a lack of clarity about the job, that is, a discrepancy between the information available to the employee and that which is required for successful job performance. In comparison to role conflict, role ambiguity has the highest correlation to job dissatisfaction. Role ambiguity is especially common amongst school administrators.

Individual Factors

Personal factors such as financial stability, marital satisfaction, as well as personality factors such neuroticism, excessive shyness, inflexibility, and poor stress management skills all contribute to how one is affected by stress on the job. The mutual interaction and accumulation of both personal and occupational stressors can certainly contribute to job burnout.

Training Deficits

Several different areas of job training are necessary to prevent occupational distress. The most obvious area is adequate initial preparation. Training and competencies are necessary to bolster confidence, as well as to allow the worker to get through each day without unnecessary dependence upon others or upon reference materials. On-the-job training is also necessary as technology advances. New professionals are most susceptible to some forms of distress. Secondly, training in communications skills is necessary in order to facilitate the ability of the employee to relate successfully with supervisors, fellow workers, and recipients of services or products. According to one survey, jobs are more frequently lost because of poor communication than because of any other factor. Finally, one needs to be taught how to deal with stress. Everyone needs to learn methods of coping with the variety of stressors faced each day.

Other Factors and Considerations

There are other secondary factors that can exacerbate stress such as poor working conditions, lack of job security, lifestyle changes, and a rapidly changing society that force individuals to make unexpected adjustments in their way of life and work. Administrators, teachers, and staff all face specific stressors that are unique to their position or role; however, most of these stressors fall within the general framework outlined above.

In his book, ***Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy*** (1996), Gerald Corey lists the following as the causes of burnout:

Causes of Burnout

Rather than having a single cause, burnout results from a combination of factors. It is best understood by considering the individual, interpersonal, and organizational factors that contribute to the condition. Recognizing the causes of burnout can itself be a step in dealing with it. A few of them are:

- doing the same type of work with little variation, especially if this work seems meaningless;
- giving a great deal personally and not getting back much in the way of appreciation or other positive responses;
- lacking a sense of accomplishment and meaning in work;
- being under constant and strong pressure to produce, perform, and meet deadlines, many of which may be unrealistic;
- working with a difficult population, such as those who are highly resistant, who are involuntary clients, or who show very little progress;
- conflict and tension among staff; absence of support from colleagues and an abundance of criticism;
- lack of trust between supervisor and mental-health workers, leading to conditions in which they are working against each other instead of toward commonly valued goals;
- not having opportunities for personal expression or for taking initiative in trying new approaches, a situation in which experimentation, change, and innovation are not only unrewarded but also actively discouraged;
- facing unrealistic demands on your time and energy;
- having a job that is both personally and professionally taxing without much opportunity for supervision, continuing education, or other forms of in-service training;
- unresolved personal conflicts beyond the job situation, such as marital tensions, chronic health problems, financial problems, and so on.

Addressing the Burnout Problem: *What the Stress Management Literature Tells Us*

The journal ***Human Relations*** (v. 49, No. 2, 1996) devoted an issue to stress management and coping. Below are brief excerpts from three of the articles which provide a good conceptual framework.

"Stress Management and Innovation Interventions at Work" (by David Bunce and Michael A. West)

Individuals frequently have to deal with occupational strain, and successful coping is central to maintaining psychological and physiological well-being. Coping encompasses a broad range of responses which either involve adapting some aspect of self to the stressor, or alternatively dealing with the problem giving rise to strain. Examples of the former include resigned acceptance, cognitive redefinition or avoidance, and affective regulation (Moos & Billings, 1982). Responses addressing the latter might involve changing environmental pressures, barriers or procedures (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964).

Early theoretical and empirical work into stress coping largely made the assumption that individuals adapt themselves to stressful environments, and do little to change those environments. An example of this is Selye's (1936) formulation of general adaptation syndrome which emphasized the environment's deleterious effect on the organism. More recently though, theoretical frameworks have recognized that individuals might cope through changing stressful aspects of their environments.

Essentially the literature identifies two main forms of coping, *emotion-focused coping*, directed toward regulating the emotions aroused by stressors, and *problem-focused coping*, where attempts are made to manage or change the problems giving rise to strain (e.g., Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). This distinction between the functions of the two forms of coping has been recognized by various researchers (e.g., Kahn et al., 1964; Mechanic, 1962).

Emotion-focused coping is likely to be adopted when an appraisal is made that nothing can be done to modify harmful, threatening, or challenging environmental conditions (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980, 1985). Two groups of strategies are identified: those derived from theory and research into defensive processes (e.g., avoidance, minimization, distancing, selective attention, positive comparisons, seeing the positive side of negative events), and those where the individual cognitively reappraises the situation. Here the meaning of the situation is changed to be less harmful, threatening, or challenging.

Folkman and Lazarus (1980, 1985) suggest that problem-focused coping is more likely when the situation is appraised as being amenable to change. According to Moos and Billings (1982) this type of coping may involve modifying or eliminating the source of stress, dealing with the tangible consequences of the

problem, or actively changing the self so as to develop a more satisfactory situation (e.g., learning new skills). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) liken problem-focused strategies to those used for problem solving. However, following Kahn et al. (1964), they broaden the perspective to distinguish between problem-focused coping strategies directed inward toward self (cf. appraisal-focused coping: Moos & Billings, 1982; Billing & Moos, 1984), and those directed outwardly toward the environment.

The emotion-focused versus the problem-focused coping dichotomy serves as a useful framework within which to locate innovative coping. We see innovative coping as an outwardly directed problem-coping strategy. This is because it is an active strategy to change the actual stressor. We define innovative coping as occurring when:

> ...an individual perceives him or herself to intentionally introduce and apply alone or within a group new skills or procedures designed to significantly benefit self or the group in that recognized external demands appraised as taxing or exceeding resources are actually reduced or alleviated.

This definition recognizes the role of perception in psychological stress (e.g., McGrath, 1976; Lazarus, 1996), and also the pivotal relationship between demands and resources central to many definitions of coping (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Furthermore, it incorporates the core elements of West and Farr's (1989) conceptualization of innovation at work.

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"Coping With Stress: Public Welfare Supervisors Doing Their Best"
(by Pauline Irit Erera-Weatherley)

The following graphic representations and tables help clarify the author's theoretical framework

COPING CATEGORIES

Problem-Focused	Emotion-Focused

SOURCES OF STRESS

Ambiguous Policies	Management and Peer Expectations

TARGETS OF COPING

Buffering Subordinates	Self Protection

SPECIFIC MECHANISMS

Modifying policies; Selective Ignoring; Prioritizing; Cognitive-Redefining; High Risk Making Decisions; Seeking Information; Advocating Subordinates; Postponing; Avoiding	Seeking Emotional Support From Subordinates; Emotional Distancing; Compartmentalizing; Taking Time Off; Changing Jobs; Repressing; Altering Values; Lowering Personal Expectation

Taxonomy of problem and emotion-focused coping.

Table 1. Problem and Emotional-Focused Coping Mechanisms and Their Effectiveness

Problem-focused mechanisms	Emotion-focused mechanisms
Effective	**Effective**
Modifying policies	Seeking emotional support from subordinates
Selective ignoring of policies	Emotional distancing
Prioritizing polices	Taking time off
Cognitive redefining policies	Compartmentalizing work/home
Seeking information*	Changing jobs
Advocating subordinates	
Ineffective	**Ineffective**
Seeking Information	Lowering expectations
High risk decision making	Altering personal values
Postponing risky decisions	Repressing thoughts and emotions
Avoiding risky decisions	

*Seeking information is the only mechanism which some respondents perceived as effective, and others as ineffective.

Table II. Characterization of Problem- and Emotion-Focused Coping Mechanisms

Coping mechanism	Characteristics
I. Problem-focused coping mechanism	
Modifying policies - altering, interpreting and adding new content	"Many rules don't seem to apply to the situations we are dealing with...you have to bend things a little." "You have to pick up the most advantageous portion of the program. What seems to fit, and then add all the extras yourself."
Selective ignoring and discarding of policies	"I don't want them (the workers) to be confused, so I drop those parts (of the policies) that don't make sense."
Prioritizing: implementing policies in order of importance	"You really become a politician: you're figuring out what are the necessities that must be done...what's the bottom line." "Probably I could have had more quality work but I set my priorities. You don't have time for everything."
Cognitive redefining of ambiguous policies	"I sort of simplify them (the policies). Just a little, to make it easier on them (the workers). It's confusing enough.."
Seeking information from superiors and policy makers (effective)	"Sometimes I'll discuss it (policy) with him (second-line supervisor), and see what he thinks." "If you want to know (about policies), you better phone Albany. If you wait it will be too late."
Seeking information from superiors, policy makers, and peers (ineffective)	"You want their (management) opinion, but they say: 'It's up to you'...they don't want to be held accountable." "Sometimes a unit will have the information that could make your job easier, but they don't pass it out to you...they withhold it."
High-risk decision making under extreme uncertainty	"You're never comfortable with a decision you make."
Postponing risky decisions	"Sometimes it's better to wait, not to get involved, because they (Albany) might change it any way, or forget about it, or something."
Avoiding risky decisions	"At times you are afraid to make a decision because it might be the wrong decision and no one is going to back you up with it."
Advocating subordinates' needs to peer and management (or refraining from such advocacy)	"In the beginning I justified my workers all the time. You know, I didn't want to be unpopular. Over the years I am able to handle it better. If I can justify the administrators, I do."
II. Emotion-focused coping mechanisms	
Seeking emotional support from subordinates	"They (the subordinates) are not angry with me, but with the administration." "They don't complain. They take instructions well. Perhaps because they understand. They're very good."
Emotional distancing	"There's no sense getting all worked up About things you can't change."
Taking time off during and after work	"I always take lunch hour away from this place."
Compartmentalizing work and self	"I'll go home at night and don't even want to talk about work. I'm done with it."
Changing jobs inside or outside DSS	"The best thing I did for myself was moving away from this work (direct service)."
Lowering expectations of oneself, others, and policies	"If you work long enough, you learn not to expect too much of yourself. If you can (do what is required), fine. If you can't you can't. It's a matter of lowering your expectations."
Altering personal values about clients and service delivery	"I find that my values have changed during the five years I've worked here. I used to be what's considered a 'bleeding heart liberal.' Now I'm not. But I think I still am basically sympathetic to a lot of their (clients') needs."
Repressing upsetting work-related thoughts and emotions	"I'm trying not to think about it all...I Don't like to admit it." "I don't get visibly upset. I say it (management expectations) doesn't bother me, but I know it does. I have high blood pressure."

"Measuring Coping: A Review and Critique"
(by Susan Oakland and Alistair Ostell)

In this article, Susan Oakland and Alistair Ostell cite Billings and Moos (1984) who describe three domains of coping that have implication for developing strategies:

- Appraisal-focused coping: appraising and reappraising the stressful situation
- Problem-focused coping: active efforts to deal with the stressor
- Emotion-focused coping: attempts to handle the emotions aroused by the stressor.

They also analyzed Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) coping checklist and came up with a list of problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies. These are:

Instrumental Action. Representing efforts toward managing the problem with items such as "Made a plan of action and followed it."

Negotiation. Another problem-focused tactic directed at bargaining or compromising to get something positive from the situation.

Exercising Caution. Holding back actions which may do more harm than good, expressed by items such as "Tried not to burn my bridges but leave things open somewhat."

Escapism. An emotion-focused factor related to wishful thinking, fantasizing or excessive indulgence in drugs, sex, alcohol, etc.

Self-Blame. Intropunitive strategies directed at the self rather than the problem and represented by items such as "Realized that I brought the problem on myself."

Seeking Meaning. An emotion-focused strategy concerned with attempts to discover new faith or turning to religion.

Minimization. Conscious coping efforts to refuse to dwell on the problem and expressed in items such as "Refuse to get serious about the situation."

Social Support. Efforts to mobilize advice information and emotional support to help with either the problem and/or the distress experienced.

They conclude:

> In summary, what these contradictory and inconsistent findings suggest is that a particular coping strategy cannot be valued and labeled as "effective" or "ineffective" without reference to the context in which it is used. Different coping strategies can have different outcomes in different situations. Or, in the same type of situation, the same coping strategies can be used by different people with different outcomes. Given this, the most we can deduce from any study using coping checklists is that some forms of coping, such as planful problem solving or positive appraisal or seeking support, will have salubrious effects on certain person and situational outcomes, in certain circumstances involving certain individuals. Or, strategies such as confrontive coping, denial or escapism will have deleterious effects in some populations and in some contexts. But the extent to which these effects are context and/or individual specific is still not clear, because typical coping measures take only static snapshots of what most researchers agree (e.g., Aldwin & Revenson, 1987; Dewe, 1992; Edwards, 1988; Folkman & Lazarus, 1985) is essentially a dynamic, bidirectional relationship between the individual and the situation. It is feasible, of course, as Aldwin and Revenson (1987) point out, that the apparent inconsistencies and contradictory findings may, in part, be due to methodological variances in measures and varying sample characteristics. However, they may also be a reflection of a number of inherent weaknesses in the methods/foci approach to coping.

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In his book, *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy* (1996), Gerald Corey offers the following ways to prevent burnout...

Preventing Burnout

Learning to look within yourself to determine what choices you are making (and not making) to keep yourself alive can go a long way in preventing what some people consider to be an inevitable condition associated with the helping professions. It is crucial to recognize that you have considerable control over whether you become burned out. Although you cannot always control stressful events, you do have a great deal of control over how you interpret and react to these events. What is so important to realize is that you cannot continue to give and give while getting little in return. There is a price to pay for always being available and for assuming that you are able to control the lives and destinies of others. Become attuned to the subtle signs of burnout, rather than waiting for a full-blown condition of emotional and physical exhaustion to set in. Develop your own strategy for keeping yourself alive personally and professionally. A few suggestions for preventing burnout follow:

- Evaluate your goals, priorities, and expectations to see if they are realistic and if they are getting you what you want.
- Recognize that you can be an active agent in your life.
- Find other interests besides work, especially if your work is not meeting your most important needs.
- Think of ways to bring variety into work.
- Take the initiative to start new projects that have personal meaning, and do not wait for the system to sanction this initiative.
- Learn to monitor the impact of stress, on the job and at home.
- Attend to your health through adequate sleep, an exercise program, proper diet, and meditation or relaxation.
- Develop a few friendships that are characterized by a mutuality of giving and receiving.
- Learn how to ask for what you want, though don't expect always to get it.
- Learn how to work for self-confirmation and for self-rewards, as opposed to looking externally for validation.
- Find meaning through play, travel, or new experiences.
- Take the time to evaluate the meaningfulness of your projects to determine where you should continue to invest time and energy
- Avoid assuming burdens that are properly the responsibility of others. If you worry more about your clients than they do about themselves, for example, it would be well for you to reconsider this investment.
- Take classes and workshops, attend conferences, and read to gain new perspectives on old issues.
- Rearrange your schedule to reduce stress.
- Learn your limits, and learn to set limits with others.
- Learn to accept yourself with your imperfections, including being able to forgive yourself when you make a mistake or do not live up to your ideals.
- Exchange jobs with a colleague for a short period, or ask a colleague to join forces in a common work project.
- Form a support group with colleagues to share feelings of frustration an to find better ways of approaching the reality of difficult job situation.
- Cultivate some hobbies that bring pleasure.
- Make time for your spiritual growth.
- Become more active in your professional organization.

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III. Brief Research Syntheses Available from the ERIC Clearinghouses.

The following is a brief sampling of ERIC Digests (research syntheses) related to Staff Burnout and Burnout Interventions. They are available in libraries, over the Internet, or directly from the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) by phone, 1-800-LET-ERIC.

For information on searching for and accessing ERIC documents over the Internet, see the Internet Resources section of this introductory packet.

An example of a complete digest is at the end of this Introductory Packet.

- 1991 -- ERIC Digest, number ED 340 812 Urban School Restructuring and Teacher Burnout
- 1989 -- ERIC Digest, number ED 308 657 Fourteen Tips to Help Special Educators Deal with Stress
- 1987 -- ERIC Digest, number ED 291 017 Understanding and Managing Stress in the Academic World
- 1984 -- ERIC Digest, number ED 259 449 Motivating Teachers for Excellence

Person Coping Techniques

A variety of psychological techniques have been advocated for helping individuals cope with stress. The limitations of such a person-coping model should be evident from any comprehensive discussion of the causes of burnout. At the same time, every mental health professional will want to have some familiarity with specific coping techniques. The following list is from a chapter by John McManus entitled "Understanding and Managing Stress" Crisis Intervention from the book *Strategies for School-Based Helpers* (1986).

Assertiveness - becoming aware of personal needs, desires, feelings and rights and expressing them interpersonally in a considerate caring manner

Attention Training - learning to focus better on performing a stressful task by using verbal reminders and reinforcement

Behavior Modification - altering behavior through a variety of overt techniques, including behavioral assessment, positive reinforcement, shaping, extinction, and punishment

Behavioral Rehearsal - practicing a stressful behavior many times before carrying it out in a real life situation

Cognitive Awareness (Life Style Assessment) - increasing self awareness of personal stress by cognitively looking at all dimensions of one's life, then altering aspects of the environment and habitual behaviors which create stress

Cognitive Restructuring - learning to recognize faulty, irrational, and self-defeating thinking patterns and self statements and replacing them with rational thoughts, self statements and behaviors (employed in rational emotive therapy approach)

Conflict Resolution - reducing interpersonal stress in conflict situations through communication and problem-solving skills

Coping Reappraisal - cognitively assessing potential coping responses and resources other than those currently being employed ineffectually

Coping Skills Training - learning to manage stress from a comprehensive perspective, emphasizing the relationship among cognitions, physiological responses and behaviors and developing coping strategies in each area

Covert Modeling - imagining other persons and yourself successfully overcoming obstacles in performing desired behaviors and practicing those behaviors in the mind

Covert Reinforcement - pairing desired behaviors with positive reinforcement in the imagination in order to reduce associated stress

Covert Sensitization -eliminating destructive habits which cause stress by associating them with a very unpleasant stimulus in the imagination

Performance Feedback - receiving evaluative feedback from others regarding performance in stressful situations

Problem Solving - acting systematically rather than impulsively to solve personal problems through a logical reasoning, step-by - step process

Relabeling (Reframing) - verbally calling a problem something other than a problem, such as challenge, opportunity for personal growth. amusing episode, etc.

Role Reversal - acting in the role of another person involved in a stressful situation, observing, how a model plays your role

Selective Ignoring (Selective Awareness) - ignoring the bad parts of a stressful situation and focusing instead on the positive aspects

Self Controlled Relaxation (Cue Controlled Relaxation) - learning to increase conscious awareness of the stressor's in one's life and having them serve as cues for immediate coping responses and cognitions

Self Talk - changing negative perceptions of the self through repetitive positive self statements

Surrender - acknowledging to the self that some stressful situations are indeed beyond personal control and accepting them as they are

Systematic Desensitization - reducing anxiety associated with stressful situations through imagination and body relaxation

Think Aloud - using verbal mediation skills to reduce stress in problem-solving situations, talking self through the problem in a step-by-step manner

Thought Stopping - consciously interrupting persistent trains of stressful thoughts, such as those involved in obsessions and phobias, in order to gain control over thought patterns

Time Management - learning to prioritize tasks and balance time more efficiently

Bouncing Back from Burnout*

Judy Downs Lombardi, in: *Do You Have Teacher Burnout* (1990), suggests the following:

* Overhaul your job. Make a list of routine or tedious tasks you do as part of your job and come up with creative new ways to tackle them. Even tasks that seem fun-resistant can become more satisfying if you give free reign to your imagination.
* Try new instructional strategies. Rather than relying on safe and predictable methods you've always used, try something different. If you're tired of writing student evaluations, consider switching to portfolio assessment. (To navigate through these new waters, you may find it rewarding to team up with a colleague and share the experience.)
* Challenge yourself to keep learning. Even if you're a veteran, there's always more to learn about teaching. Identify an area, such as writing in math class or invented spelling, that you'd like to learn more about, and seek out professional development opportunities. Take a class, attend a conference, or organize a workshop.
* Collaborate with colleagues. If you resent or disregard suggestions from colleagues on how to enhance you teaching, you may be cutting yourself off from a valuable idea-sharing and support network. The more isolated you are, the greater the risk that you'll become unsure about what you're doing, suspicious of your coworkers, or short on new ideas. Colleagues can provide helpful feedback and reassurance.
* Try changing grade levels. If you've been teaching fifth grade for a while, why not consider trying your hand at kindergarten? Sometimes teaching an older or younger group of students will better fit your training, skills, and interests.
* Give yourself permission to be less than perfect. Too many teachers believe that none of their successes count if they have one failure. Accept that teaching is difficult and challenging. Pain and failure will always be part of the profession, just as joy and success will be. Keep in mind that you can only thrive if you give yourself room to make mistakes and learn from them.
*Also, if you overdo, overachieve or push yourself or your students too hard, your self-imposed pressures and demands will only stunt your growth because you'll push yourself to exhaustion.
* Try not to wrap up your identity with your job. Remember that you are not just a teacher--you are a person who has chosen to be in the teaching profession. Cultivate outside interests and hobbies.
* Realize that you can help students but you can't save them from society's ills. As difficult as it may be to accept, you can't solve all of your student's problems--you can't keep them from feeling the pain of divorce, economic hardship, and so on. Teachers can, and should, give students room to feel, think, and bear consequences, but they can't rescue students or fight their battles for them.
* Learn to care for yourself. As caretaker professionals, teachers often over care for others and under care for themselves. Nurturing your students is important, but you must first nurture yourself. Self-preservation is an essential, healthy habit, so pay more attention to your own needs and well-being. Conserve and replenish your emotional and physiological resources--they're limited!
* Practice techniques for stress reduction. If you're feeling the strains of teaching, practice strategies for relieving tension. Remember to carve out time to relax, pursue your hobbies, and spend time with family and friends. If you feel like you can't cope, consider seeing a trained counselor.
* Examine other areas of education as natural extensions of teaching. Perhaps taking more college courses would enable you to become a reading specialist, school psychologist, diagnostician, staff development trainer, consultant, guidance counselor or other staff support person. Teaching experience is often the best avenue to these specialties.
* Think through your career goals. Is teaching still right for you? Most teachers can probably think of a colleague who should have changed careers a long time ago. Don't wait until you're completely disenchanted to asses where you are going and whether it's time for a change in professions.

Dr. Judy Downs Lombardi, a professor at the University of Tampa, works with student teachers and teachers, and is always on the lookout for signs of burnout.

*From "Do you have teacher burnout."
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Agencies, Organizations and Advocacy Groups and Internet Resources

Agencies, Organizations and Advocacy Groups

American Psychological Association Help Line

Call the American Psychological Association's help line at **1-800-964-2000** for information on resources and helping professionals in your area (choose the first option).

American Institute of Stress (AIS)

The American Institute of Stress (AIS) is a nonprofit organization that serves as a resource and clearinghouse for information on stress-related matters. The Institute's services include a newsletter, reprints, monographs, and abstracts disseminated at minimal costs. AIS also evaluates stress reduction techniques and stress management programs currently being offered to industry and the public. To contact the Institute, call **1-800-24-RELAX.**

Internet Resources

The following is a list of sites on the World Wide Web that offer information and resources related to issues such as burnout, professional development, and school reform. This list is not a comprehensive list, but is meant to highlight some premier resources and serve as a beginning for your search.

The Internet is a useful tool for finding some basic resources. For a start, try using a search engine such as Yahoo and typing in the words "stress management". This will help you find relevant websites. Many of the websites you find will have "links" to other websites which cover similar topics. We have listed some below.

The American Psychological Association's "Work" page

Address: http://helping.apa.org/apawork.html
Phone: (800) 964-2000 or (202) 336-5500 for their main headquarters
Description: APA has a page on their web site that focuses on psychological issues related to working and the stresses or work. This page offers a variety of information and tips on coping with issues that range from being a working mother to being a survivor of company downsizing. This page also contains a special series on stress and ways to cope with stress.

Center for Anxiety and Stress Treatment

Address: http://www.stressrelease.com
Phone: (619) 542-0536
Description: This site has a variety of resources that aid in stress reduction including books, audiotapes and articles, including online resources. In this site you will also find a "Stress Busters" page which contains tips and techniques for reducing stress at work. This site also has a page devoted entirely to anxiety on the job.

"Stress"

Address: http://the-duke.duq-duke.duq.edu/special/stress.htm
Description: This site is devoted exclusively to providing information about stress and stress management. This site contains information on stress relief, exercises, stress-rating scales, and provides links to other sites that also specialize in stress management.

Teachers Helping Teachers

Address: http://www.pacificnet.net/~mandel/
Phone: (818) 780-1281
Description: This homepage is a networking site for teachers to field and answer questions that concern those in the teaching profession. They have a rapid question and answer feature, where users can make inquiries and get information about special issues, such as burnout and job stress. This page's focus is on networking and support between teachers. Teaching tips and classroom activities are posted regularly by fellow teachers.

KAIROS Support for Caregivers

Address: http://www.the-park.com/kairos/welcome.htm
Phone: (415) 861-0877
Description: This organization specializes in helping helpers of those suffering from terminal illnesses such as AIDS. They offer workshops, networking, and information that addresses issues like compassion fatigue, care giver stress and health, etc. Although they mainly work with care givers of those suffering from AIDS they can provide information that is relevant to others who have stressful jobs in the helping professions.

Pathways to School Improvement

Address: http://ncrel.org/ncrel/sdrs/pathways.htm
Phone: Contact North Central Regional Educational Lab at (708) 571-4700
Description: This award-winning, multimedia homepage has an entire section devoted to professional development, complete with on-line videos and lectures that address issues related to systemic reform. They also have several on-line lectures that address the need for systemic reform as a necessary step towards successful staff improvement and growth.

Some Model Programs

Supporting Professionals-at-Risk: Evaluating Interventions to Reduce Burnout and Improve Retention of Special Educators

Elizabeth Cooley, Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development

Paul Yovanoff, Alder Group, Inc.

Two interventions were designed to equip participants with specific problem-solving and coping strategies for dealing more effectively with the stressors they encounter on the job. The interventions targeted *self-preservation skill* for educators - those skills and strategies most likely to help an individual remain relatively "sane," even in relatively "insane"" places. On first glance, one might construe our approach to be a quick fix, because its duration was only 10 weeks at 2 hr/week. And naturally, given the complexity and scope of the systemic issues that contribute to teachers' burnout and attrition, a 10-week program might seem inadequate. Nevertheless, even as more large-scale organizational or political interventions are developed and implemented toward redress of the larger problems, we believed it would be worth while to assist practicing professionals in managing the immediate situations before them - that is, to do the best they can with what they've got. Specifically, the program consisted of two interventions.

Intervention 1: Stress Management-Burnout Prevention Workshops

As mentioned, many of the stressful aspects of the special education teaching profession are either inherent to the situation or difficult to change. Moreover, the burnout that often results from demanding and stressful working conditions can itself exacerbate difficulties because of its accompanying negative, self-defeating coping behaviors.

Coping takes many forms. Approaches to handling stress may be either *direct* (e.g., changing the source of stress) or *indirect* (e.g., changing the way one thinks about or physically responds to the stress to reduce its impact). In addition, coping strategies may be *active* (e.g., taking some action to change oneself or the situation) or *inactive* (e.g., avoiding or denying the source of stress). In general, active strategies are more effective than inactive ones, while both direct and indirect strategies can be constructive (Pines & Aronson, 1988).

The program consisted of five weekly 2-hr workshops that were informal and supportive, and that followed a format of interactive presentation, small/large-group discussion, applications during sessions, and practice between sessions. The content for these sessions targeted three types of coping skills:

1. Skills for changing the situation itself: Situational coping skills. Drawing on management and problem-solving literature, these sessions offered two frameworks for looking at and changing stressful situations by first identifying the changeable aspects and then using a problem-solving approach to develop and carry out an action plan for creating solutions. Participants were also provided specific assertive communication tools for enlisting the cooperation of others in seeking and implementing positive change, and for setting and keeping appropriate limits.

2. Skills for changing one's physical response to the situation: Physiological coping skills. *Stress* is fundamentally a form of wear and tear on the body. Thus, we drew on a variety of literature on physiological stress-coping strategies for these sessions. Participants learned both long (30-min) and very short (30-s) forms of muscle relaxation that can be used for self-renewal in everyday work situations (Woolfolk & Lehrer, 1984). As well, we touched on other physiological approaches for coping with stress (e.g., nutrition and stretching).

3. Skills for changing how one thinks about the situation: Cognitive coping skills. Simply put, much stress happens "between the ears' as a result of our thoughts and beliefs, or cognitions. These sessions drew on cognitive therapy literature and targeted ways to replace self-defeating, self-limiting beliefs with beliefs that are more constructive, realistic, and empowering. Participants learned first to recognize distorted or self-defeating beliefs and then to coach themselves and one another to think differently about themselves or about the situation. Specifically, they coached one another in ways to let go of unrealistic, even tyrannical expectations they held of themselves given the limitations and realities of the situations they faced and to give themselves permission to view their best efforts as good enough.

All sessions followed a format of interactive lecture, small-group discussions and role plays, with homework assignments that provided participants the opportunity to try out the skills and new behaviors in their work environments. Each session began with small- and large-group discussion of the experiences gained via the homework assignments, and assignments were turned in for the instructors' review and feedback.

Intervention 2.- The Peer Collaboration Program

Because of the apparent value of collegial support in preventing or alleviating job stress and burnout, researchers have advocated creating more regular opportunities for peer support for special education teachers and others in stressful job roles.

Due to its emphasis on supportive, constructive dialogue between professional peers, this intervention seems to have potential for addressing issues of collegial isolation and lack of administrative support among special educators.

The Peer Collaboration Program, as originally developed, consisted of training pairs of teachers to use a four-step collegial dialogue to assist each other in identifying and solving student related problems. For this study, it was modified to apply other work-related problems as well. Via this process, each member of the pair takes a turn as - "initiator" (the one presenting a problem) and a "facilitator" (the one providing assistance in problem-solving). The four steps were as *follows:*

1. ***Clarifying.*** The initiating teacher brings a brief, written description of the problem and responds to clarifying questions asked by the facilitator. This step is the longest of the four designed to assist the initiating teacher to think of the problem in different or expanded ways. This step continues until the initiating teacher feels that all of the relevant issues have been covered and is ready to move on to summarizing.

2. ***Summarizing.*** In this step, the initiating teacher summarizes three facets of the problem being discussed: the specific patterns of behavior that are problematic, the teacher's typical response to them, and the particular aspects of the problem that fall under the teacher's control.

3. Intervention and Prediction. The teachers together generate three possible action plans, and the initiator predicts possible positive and negative outcomes for each one. The initiator then chooses one of the solutions for implementation.

4. Evaluation. The initiator develops a two part plan to evaluate the solution's effectiveness. The first part consists of a plan to answer the question "Did I do it?" (i.e., implementation of the solution), and the second part consists of ways to answer the question "Did it work?" (i.e., impact on targeted outcomes).

Participants attended one 3-hr training sessions in which the process was described, modeled, and practiced with feedback from other participants and from the instructors.

In general, schools attempt to minimize burnout in three ways:

- reducing environment stressors
- increasing personal capabilities (job competence and stress coping)
- enhancing social supports

Additional examples of each of these are:

Reducing Environment Stressors

Urban School Restructuring

In the book, *Urban School Restructuring and Teacher Burnout* (1991), Barry Farber and Carol Ascher discuss how several components of school restructuring namely: school-based management accountability, career ladders, school-within-schools, curriculum initiatives, flexible scheduling and team teaching, have the potential of improving the context of urban teaching. Each can possibly promote a greater sense of efficacy and control among teachers, and a stronger teacher - student connection. However, the authors also underscore how the process involved in school restructuring can lead to teacher burnout. Ultimately, the authors conclude that unless the structural components directly address ways to improve teaching and learning such as district policies on pupil assignment, professional development, or evaluation which are all critical to teacher well-being, teacher burnout will continue to be a prevailing concern in the school system.

For a more detailed discussion of this model refer to the ERIC Digest section of this introductory packet.

Increasing Personal Capabilities

Job Competence

Around the country a variety of model programs have been established to enhance professional competence and growth and in the process to counter burnout. The following are but two examples.

Atlanta Public Schools -- Atlanta has a Teacher Resource Center which provides teachers and non-instructional staff with staff development services. The center has several functions: student teacher placement, certification renewal, staff training, and personnel evaluation. The Teacher Resource Center is equipped with a technology center, a teacher center, a media services center, a science center, and a professional library. In 1994, the center provided 1,336 workshops to over 38,000 participants. Participants included teachers, administrators, service employees, students, and parents. In addition, the center has a New Teacher Institute which provides new teachers with support, seminars, mentors, and orientation. The center also provides conflict resolution and peer mediation training.

Contact: Dr. Chuck Fuller, Director of Staff Development, Atlanta Public Schools, 210 Pryor St., SW, Atlanta, GA 30335. Phone: (404) 827-8657.

Baltimore City Public Schools -- Baltimore's Professional Development Center has several components. The center offers district staff a series of workshops, ranging in issues from classroom management to leadership development to technology to safety. BCPS also has an Academy for Educational Leadership, which offers a Skill Builder Series. This series of seminars and workshops is offered to all school system leaders -- Superintendent's Cabinet, principals, assistant principals, and central office leaders.

Contact: Lyle. R. Patzkowsky, Director of Leadership Development. City of Baltimore, Department of Education, Department of Professional Development, Organizational Development and Attitudinal Reform, 2500 E. Northern Pkwy., Baltimore, MD 21214. Telephone: (410) 396-1520/21.

Stress Coping

Many school districts have established employee assistance programs that can help school professionals enhance their ability to cope with stress. As described by one district:

Employee Assistance Program -- Employee assistance programs are designed to help employees deal with personal problems. Most of us have stresses at some time in our lives. Generally we can managed them on our own. At times, however, it is helpful to discuss problems with someone other than our family or friends. This program provides you and your family with such an opportunity.

Examples of the type of assistance provided are: Crisis intervention, assessment, information, and referral services are available for a wide range of problems which affect personal lives, and may carry over into work. Stresses such as marital and family difficulties, problems with drinking or drugs, or emotional distresses, can be discussed confidentially through an early assistance program.

Social Support

There are a variety of ways school professionals can enhance social support as a way to minimize burnout. These include working together on problems (teaming), establishing mutual support groups, and creating debriefing mechanisms. A good example of a debriefing mechanism is the *Critical Incident Stress Debriefing* process that was developed for crisis workers.

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

This is a technique for the reduction of stress and the mitigation of its ill effects (J. T. Mitchell & G.S. Evely, *Critical Incident Stress Debriefing*, Chevron Pub.,Ellicott City, MD, 1993).

A debriefing is a clinician guided group discussion of a traumatic event. It is a psychological and educational process intended (1) to mitigate the impact of a traumatic event, and (2) to accelerate normal recovery in normal people with normal reactions to abnormal events. The session should occur between 24 and 72 hours after the event.

Debriefing is an opportunity for

- education on stress and its effects
- ventilation of pent-up emotion
- reassurance
- forewarning of predictable symptoms and reactions to stress
- confronting the fallacies of uniqueness and abnormality
- positive contact with a mental health professional
- building group cohesiveness
- interagency cooperation
- doing prevention
- screening to identify persons in crisis or at high risk
- referring persons in need to appropriate resources

Introduction Phase

The leader

- explains the purpose of debriefing
- describes the process
- attempts to motivate the participants
- states the rules
- ask for initial questions
- provide reassurance
- presents the first set of questions to be raised
- encourages mutual support
- discusses resistance

The rules for the session

- observe confidentiality of group process
- speak for yourself alone
- no one is required to speak
- if someone must leave, ask them to return

Fact phase

Focuses on the facts of what occurred. The group is asked to reflect on the following questions, and then moving around the circle asked to share their remembrances:

- Who are you?
- What occurred in this incident?
- What happened to you in this incident?

The purpose of this phase is simply to get the facts of what happened.

Thought Phase

This phase is intended to get at the person's thoughts about the event, and is focused on the question:

- What thought(s) first occurred to you at the start?
- What was the worst thought for you during this event?

Once again, participants go around the circle sharing.

Reaction Phase

The reaction phase seeks to focus on the participants feelings regarding the experience. In this phase the participants are invited to speak up as they wish. This phase focuses on the questions:

- What about this incident got under your skin?
- What was the very worst part of this event for you?
- What was your "gut" reaction?

Symptom Phase

This phase is intended to help participants see the changes in behavior, which are often negative, this stress is having upon them, but to see it in a supportive situation which enables them to see these reactions as normal reactions of normal people under abnormal circumstances. The participants are told that what is now being sought are the cognitive, behavioral, emotional and physical effects stress may be having upon some of them. The question of focus is

- How do you know this experience was so bad? What signs of stress do you see in yourself?
  - >at the time of the event
  - >1-3 days later
  - >now

Teaching Phase

This phase, which is a discussion and teaching on stress and its effects, is based on the incident and presented by the mental health professional. Start by discussing the symptoms reported in the group, and expand to discuss stress in general. Explain how normal reactions may become pathological (avoiding the use of that term is suggested), emphasize strengths evident, and recommend stress management techniques. Once again, invite questions and discuss the proposed answers.

Re-entry Phase

This, the final step, is an opportunity for participants to ask any unasked/ unanswered questions. It should be noted that at times someone who has held back at this point suddenly burst forth emotional, triggering a like reaction in others generally. This requires taking the whole group back to an earlier phase and work through the other phases once more.

This is also a time to offer what realistic reassures can be offered, to tie together loose ends, to distribute handouts, to make referrals of general type to the group, and afterward privately of an individual nature, and to summarize the whole process.

Post De-briefing

In the post de-briefing, the team reaches out to those individuals who need individual referral or immediate intervention.

The above summary was prepared by Nancy Sanford, Los Angeles Unified School District

From the Wall Street Journal (October 2, 1996)

Company Memo to Stressed-Out Employees: 'Deal With It'

(by Timothy D. Scheilhardt)

Water-pistol fights were popular for a while at S.C. Johnson & Son Inc.'s busy customer service department; so were the subsidized back-and-shoulder massages. They were designed to help reduce stress among the 43 staffers who spend long hours on the phone with testy customer for the household-products company in Racine, Wis. But these days, fewer employees take advantage of such stress-relievers. Some even stopped showing up for the massages.

Corporate America seems to be trying harder than ever to reduce employee stress. Nearly 40% of employers offer some type of help for handling stress, up from 27% in 1985, according to a government survey.

Yet often that assistance is meager. Only 27% of work sites that do offer stress management assistance provide individual counseling, and just 25% offer job reassignment or redesign, reports a study by the U.S. Public Health Service.

Some companies merely slip a brochure on stress-management into paychecks or schedule a one time lunch hour seminar. And the advice, while sound, is frequently bare-bones: get more sleep, start exercising, simplify your life and breathe deeply. Try as they might, many employees have trouble following the suggestions ...

Not surprisingly then more people report that they are frazzled and emotionally exhausted at work. The percentage of employees who believe their workload is "excessive" climbed to 44% in 1995 ...

Another reason why the help isn't helping may be that stress comes from so many different sources. Job insecurity, heavier workloads on leaner staffs, the effort to balance work and family, even "techno-stress" - trying to cope with rapid technological change - all take a toll ...

But even when corporations do offer such services, some employees are reluctant to ask for them -- especially when one source of their stress is Job insecurity. "There are still somewhat of a stigma attached to stress -- that you can't cope effectively if you say you're stressed out," says Camille Haltom, a disease-management specialist at Hewitt Associates, an employee-benefits consulting concern in Lincolnshire, ILL.

For Susan Moraconi, health-benefits and work/life manager at Hewlett-Packard Co., in Palo Alto, Calif., the right approach to managing stress involves, "getting a sense of control again" at work and in her personal rife. She recently made a list of every place in her life where she felt she had lost control. "It was a long list," she says. She worked on the easiest ones to remedy, like canceling a business trip she had considered essential.

What works for one person in reducing stress doesn't necessarily work for another, since it is often vague and subjective. That's also why stress is difficult for even the most well-meaning employers to measure, let alone correct. "You can't take a generic cookbook approach to managing stress," emphasizes Robert P. Gordon, a Northwestern University clinical psychologist who advises executives. "The causes of a person's stress are as complicated as his or her own personality," he says.

Minimizing Burnout
Consultation Cadre List:

Note: Listing is alphabetized by Region and State as an aid so you can find and network with resources closest to you.

Our list of professionals is growing daily. Here are a few names as a beginning.

Central States

Iowa

Arthur Carder
Executive Director
Heartland Center
320 Tucker Building
Clinton, IA 52732
Phone: 319/243-5633
Fax: 319/243-9567

Indiana

Susan Johnson
Clinic Social Worker
Tech. Teen Clinic of Health Net Inc.
1500 E. Michigan Street
Room 120
Indianapolis, IN 46201
Phone: 317/226-3929

Michigan

Nancy Adadow Gray
Director, Fam. Coun.; Comm. MH Services
Arab Community C enter for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)
2601 Saulino Court
Dearborn, MI 48120
Phone: 313/843-2844
Fax: 313/842-5150

Michigan (cont.)

Kai Jackson
Family Health Center, Inc. Edison School-based Health Center
924 Russell Ave.
Kalamazoo, MI 49006
Phone: 616-349-2646
Fax: 616-349-2490
Email: kaimj@juno.com

Minnesota

Gordon Wrobel
Mental Health Consultant
Minnesota Dept of Children, Families & Learning
830 Capitol Square Building
St. Paul, MN 55101
Phone: 612/297-1641
Fax: 612/297-7368
Email: gordon.wrobel@state.mn.us

Northwest

Delaware

Bobbi Titus
Coordinator
Christiana High School
190 Salem Church Rd.
Bldg. H 140
Newark, DE 19713
Phone: 302/454-5421
Fax: 302/368-1421

Montana

Judith Birch
Guidance Specialist
Office of Public Instruction
State Capitol, Rm 106
P.O. Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501
Phone: 406/444-5663
Fax: 406/444-3924
Email: jbirch@opi.mt.gov

Northwest (cont.)

Washington

Nancy Sutherland
School Nurse
Edmonds School District
20420 68th Avenue West
Lynnwood, WA 98036
Phone: 206/670-7325
Fax: 206/670-7182

Southeast

Alabama

Deborah Cleckley
Director, Quality Assurance/Education
Jefferson County Department of Health
1400 6th Avenue, South
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Phone: 205/930-1401
Fax: 205/930-1979
Email: dcleckley@jcdh.org

Kentucky

David Mawn
IRIS Commonwealth Process Coordinator
Integrated Resources in Schools - State Interagency Council
100 Fair Oaks
4th Floor
Frankfort, KY 40601
Phone: 502/564-7610
Fax: 502/564-9010
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Professor of Psychology
Western Kentucky University
Psychology Department
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Email: william.pfohl@wicu.edu

Lousiana

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Director
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Phone: 504/735-8695
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Email: health@bsb.kiz.la.us

Lousiana (cont.)

Sandra Simien
BCSW, Clinic Director
Eden Park School Based Health Clinic
2550 Bogan Walk
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Phone: 504/336-1885
Fax: 504/343-1656

North Carolina

Bill Hussey
Section Chief
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Raleigh, NC 27601-2825
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Sherry Jones
Assertive Outreach Counselor
Roanoke-Chowan Human Service Center
Rt. 3 Box 22A
Ahoskie, NC 27910
Phone: 919/332-4137

Virginia

Richard Abidin
Director of Clinical Training
Curry Programs in Clinical and School Psychology
University of Virginia
405 Emmet Street, 147 Ruffner Hall
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Fax: 804/924-1433
Email: rra@virginia.edu

Southwest

California

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5151 State University Drive
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Alfredo Crespo
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9650 Zelzah Ave.
Northridge, CA 91325
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Ellen Hannan
School Nurse
Los Angeles Unified School District
1218 9th Street #6
Santa Monica, CA 90401
Phone: 310/395-4356
Fax: 310/395-4356

Janice Jetton
Pediatric/Adolescent Nurse Practitioner
Kaiser Permanente, Orange County Coordinator
1982 Port Locksleigh Place
Newport Beach, CA 92660
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Email: JanJettor@adc.com

Ernest Lotecka
Director
APAL Foundation
7510 Brava Street
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Consultant
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Los Angeles, CA 90002

Colorado

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Director
Adamss Child and Family Services
7840 Pecos St.
Denver, CO 80221
Phone: 303/853-3431
Fax: 303/428-0233

New Mexico

Jane McGrath
School Health Officer
New Mexico Dept. of Health
Office of School Health
P.O. Box 25846
Albuquerque, NM 87106
Phone: 505/827-3200
Fax: 505/841-4826

Nevada

Rita McGary
Social Worker
Miguel Rivera Family Resource Center
1539 Foster Rd.
Reno, NV 89509
Phone: 702/689-2573
Fax: 702/689-2574
Email: sunwindy@aol.com

Texas

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An Example of an ERIC Digest

ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, New York, N.Y.

Urban School Restructuring and Teacher Burnout.

ERIC/CUE Digest, Number 75, ED340812 Jul 91.

Authors: Farber, Barry; Ascher, Carol

Urban schools have long been troubled and have endured many waves of reform. Consequently, staff exhaustion and cynicism often affect how, and even whether, these reforms are implemented. While school restructuring, the latest reform measure, can break down bureaucracy and empower teachers, it also can seem distant from the day-to-day problems of most teachers, and even increase burnout among some (Corcoran, Walker, & White, 1988).

Burnout--the reaction to prolonged high stress--commonly results either in withdrawing and caring less, or in working harder, often mechanically, to the point of exhaustion (Farber, 1991). This digest considers the impact of several components of school restructuring on burnout.

SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT

School-based management (SBM) offers greater participation in decision-making to teachers, parents, and others at the school level. In the best case, SBM empowers teachers to develop the process and goals of education, and enhances their sense of professionalism. For some, the chance to exercise administrative and negotiating skills may be a welcome challenge (Lichtenstein, McLaughlin, & Knudsen, 1991).

But SBM may also involve teachers either in long meetings about insignificant decisions or in making important decisions for which they lack resources, support, and expertise. In troubled schools, SBM teams can get bogged down in daily crises, resulting in frustration as long-term goals recede from sight (Richardson & Sistrunk, 1989). At the same time, by raising the school board's and the general public's expectations, SBM may increase pressure on teachers.

Furthermore, reputedly empowered teachers may not relish their authority, feel more effective in their classrooms, or experience themselves as professionally enhanced. In fact, teachers' sense of empowerment may arise less from controlling what goes on in a school than from their knowledge about their fields, their professional community, and educational policy (Lichtenstein, McLaughlin, & Knudsen, 1991).

Finally, SBM may increase frustration if teachers' new control doesn't lead to clear educational benefits, and if the new bureaucracy is as intransigent as the school principal, acting autonomously, has been (Gomez, 1989).

ACCOUNTABILITY

When accountability systems help teachers identify and serve their students' needs, these systems can reduce burnout. However, burned-out teachers already exhausted may not participate in the extensive thinking necessary to develop an effective system, and then may experience the system as an externally imposed and inflexible interference in their classroom.

By inviting scrutiny from new sources, even good accountability systems increase teacher stress and can promote covert competition, as teachers strive to make their classroom "the best" (Trusman, 1989). Finally, insofar as accountability systems are based on externally imposed criteria, they are antithetical to teacher empowerment, which has long been considered one of the strongest antidotes to burnout (Friedman, 1991).

CAREER LADDERS

Career ladders show respect for experienced teachers demonstrating particular excellence by offering promotional opportunities. They enable teachers to earn more money, take on new roles (mentoring novice teachers, for instance), and gain more prestige and professional fulfillment.

However, as with any system that rewards only some individuals, competition increases. Bitterness and cynicism may also result if the criteria for promotion are ambiguous or are tainted by political considerations. Promoted teachers may experience added stress and burnout if extra pay and prestige are not accompanied by sufficient resources or administrative support.

SCHOOLS-WITHIN-SCHOOLS

Breaking down large schools into small communities is an easy way to improve the quality of life for both teachers and students. Schools-within-schools enable better communication among teachers, parents, and students; enhance the staffs sense of control; and promote a generally warmer, more intimate atmosphere (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988).

Of course, a small community can also promote increased scrutiny and greater group tension, exacerbating jealousy, favoritism, and competition for scarce resources. Sometimes the minischools within a larger school also compete for recognition and resources, and add a layer of bureaucracy and stress to an already oppressive structure.

Because minischools are small, intense communities, only one or two burned-out teachers can sabotage the high energy needed by the group. However, since it takes a fair amount of energy and enthusiasm to work in one, burned-out teachers are apt to decline an assignment there.

CURRICULUM INITIATIVES

Curriculum initiatives such as multidisciplinary units, new approaches to math or reading, and multicultural education can give teachers a renewed sense of excitement, and draw faculty together in collaborative ventures. Insofar as these initiatives are tailored to students' needs, they may improve performance, and, thus, teachers' sense of efficacy.

Ideally, curriculum changes should be accompanied by extensive staff development, mentoring, and peer coaching, but these are often in short supply. Thus, teachers may suffer from the additional stresses of having more work but not additional support.

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING AND TEAM TEACHING

Flexible scheduling and team teaching promote sustained contacts both among teachers and with students, lessening the possibility of teacher burnout by improving collegial contact and support. Yet, collaborative activities will not foster collegiality if the school sets up a competitive ethos. Nor do these reforms address the major obstacle to collegiality: heavy workloads due to large classes and undue clerical work (Corcoran, et al., 1988).

SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING AND BURNOUT

The components of school restructuring reviewed above have the potential of improving the context of urban teaching. Each can make possible a greater sense of efficacy and control among teachers, and stronger teacher-student connection. However, none affects such district policies as pupil assignment, professional development, or evaluation, all of which are critical to teachers' well-being. None ensures that teachers will be involved in decision-making or work with their peers--or that they will feel empowered by their added responsibilities. Except for the curriculum initiatives, none necessarily improves teaching and learning, the best way to decrease burnout (Farber, 1991).

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Compassion fatigue': when listening hurts

As the stress of practice intensifies, psychologists have to ask themselves, 'Am I taking care of myself?'

By Randall Edwards

The psychological and emotional demands placed on the practitioner have never been more intense, clinicians and researchers agree. Psychologists are expected to have the broadest of shoulders, absorbing without complaint the suffering and anxiety of their clients. But who takes care of the caretaker when the stress of a clinical case load becomes too great to bear alone?

Psychologists should look to their own profession for help, practitioners say, but pride and concerns about confidentiality often stand in the way.

In recent years, psychologists have suffered increased stress from the demands of the changing health-care environment, said Daniel Abrahamson, PhD, a clinical psychologist and co-founder of the Traumatic Stress Institute/Center for Adult and Adolescent Psychotherapy, or TSI/CAAP, in South Windsor, Conn. Managed-care organizations and other insurance providers require therapists to document their work with each patient in excruciating detail. That leaves providers feeling they must risk breaking a patient's confidentiality to collect reimbursement, Abrahamson said.

But psychotherapy has always been challenging, even before managed care, he said. Plumbing the depths of a troubled psyche can be emotionally draining.

"It's not just dealing with everyday problems like getting motivated, looking for a job, working through relationship problems," Abrahamson said.

Psychologists who work with patients who have suffered traumatic experiences must learn to balance objectivity and empathy, he said. "You can't become so hardened that it no longer affects you, because then you can't be there for the patient," he said. "On the other hand, you can't be horrified and outraged to the point of being paralyzed."

Many psychologists say they have already learned to balance their work and their personal life,. APA President-elect Dorothy Cantor, PsyD, a Westfield, N.J., private practitioner, says she puts her family first, takes time off for lunch every day, exercises, and vacations at what she calls her "country getaway in the city." The place has an unlisted phone number, no fax and no computer. Anyone who visits is prohibited from bringing work along.

"Psychologists can only reap the rewards and meet the demands of the profession if they find ways to replenish themselves," Cantor said.

Sharing the trauma

But when the weight of their work causes emotional or psychological problems, psychologists may be experiencing "vicarious traumatization," say two of Abrahamson's colleagues, Laurie Anne Pearlman, PhD, and Karen W. Saakvitne, PhD. They recently wrote a book about vicarious traumatization, which they define as "the enduring deleterious effects of trauma therapy on the clinician."

The phenomenon affects many trauma workers, such as firefighters, criminal defense lawyers and the staff of battered women shelters, the authors write in *Trauma and the Therapist*. But it is especially challenging to trauma therapists.

"Our clients' vivid and sometimes graphic descriptions of their brutal victimizations contribute to our vicarious traumatization," they write. "While it is often essential to their healing for clients to share specific traumatic images, we can carry these with us and they may at times appear to us, unbidden, as clear as our own internal images."

None of the researchers interviewed for this article could estimate how many psychologists suffer these symptoms, but all agreed it is far more common than published reports suggest.

Psychologists not only become helpless witnesses to a trauma, but must confront the constant possibility of personal tragedy and trauma. The confidentiality of the clinical setting often leaves the provider feeling isolated and alienated as well.

"The cumulative effect of story after story, client after client, day after day...can become a chronic condition," said Pearlman, research director of TSI/CAPP.

Charles Figley, PhD, calls the condition "compassion fatigue" and suggests that the best counselors are its most likely victims. Figley, head of the Psychosocial Stress Research Program at Florida State University, examines the problem in his recently released book, *Compassion Fatigue*.

His own experiences studying Vietnam veterans in the early 1970s first sparked his interest in the impact of traumatic stress on psychologists. Over a six-year period, he interviewed more than 800 Vietnam veterans, who discussed their traumatic experiences and the role those traumas played in later relationships.

"That experience left an indelible impression on me, and certainly at times, incapacitated me," Figley said. "There were nightmares. I was obsessed by it. The collective impression was one of anger and frustration about how these men and women were traumatized."

Figley said positive actions, from publishing the results of his research to establishing a consortium on veterans' studies, helped him to cope with his stress and his feelings of anger.

Hearing about past trauma can trigger haunting memories from a therapist's own past, Figley said. One clinician he worked with told of becoming angry with a client who was an adult survivor of childhood sexual abuse. The provider was surprised by those feelings, but as she considered them she realized that the therapy had forced to the surface her own buried anger toward an adult relative who had once fondled her when she was a child.

Based on his experience treating mental health professionals, Figley believes the providers more likely to suffer from compassion fatigue are those who are caring and empathetic. They should not be ashamed of these traits, he said.

"I tell them, 'You are showing your humanity,'" he said. "But we lose some of our best people to this because in some work situations you're perceived as a wimp if you find you can't get these images out of your mind."

Psychologists who find they are carrying this burden should "know that you are normal, recognize that you have been traumatized, and treat yourself like you would treat your patients," Figley said.

Practice what you preach

Pearlman and Saakvitne are among many psychologists who believe that all members of the profession should have had some therapy themselves. But therapists don't always practice what they prescribe.

"Caregivers sometimes have a hard time knowing when they should be taken care of," said Lynne Hornyak, PhD, a Washington, D.C., clinical psychologist. "We all need to have people in our lives who we can count on."

Hornyak said her work with therapists' children has also revealed the extent of stress in a psychologist's life.

"Children of therapists tell me that their parents are giving, supportive people, but they were not giving to *them* and they were not there for *them,*" she explained.

Practitioners often schedule their time to the minute, are exhausted by the stress of their work and don't always set themselves - or their families-as priorities.

Hornyak advises psychologists who seek treatment to carefully lay ground rules with their own counselor, discussing confidentiality, expectations and how to act when they meet in professional settings.

Coping strategies

Aside from personal psychotherapy, Saakvitne suggests other ways to help psychologists cope with vicarious treatment, compassion fatigue or burnout.

"It is our clinical responsibility to make sure we are not harmed by our work," said Saakvitne. "If we don't take care of ourselves, we can't take care of our clients."

Not surprisingly, many of her recommendations are ones psychologists have advocated for years to their own patients:

Always work under supervision, either in a group practice, through hired supervision, or by a peer supervision arrangement where psychologists discuss one another's cases and exchange recommendations.

- Take time for relaxation and for lunch, and take at least two consecutive weeks for vacation.
- Take care of your body, through diet and exercise.
- Set boundaries between home and work: Don't play therapist in personal relationships.
- To avoid isolation, get involved in professional organizations where psychologists can meet and discuss events and mutual problems.

"Balance is the key, not only in caseloads but in the rhythm of the day, in the clients we see and in our other activities as professionals," Saakvitne said.

Hornyak, however, said she thinks balance is impossible.

"A much better metaphor is juggling," she said. "You're going to have a lot of balls in the air and sometimes, balls drop. You need to make sure that the ones that drop are sturdy enough not to shatter."

Randall Edwards is a reporter with The Ohio Dispatch.

Taken from the Internet (http://www.apa.org/monitor/sep95/care.html). This is an excerpt from an article printed in the APA Monitor, September, 1995.

As Anthony Cedoline (1982) concludes:

Job satisfaction is engendered when working conditions include:

- adequate training
- reasonable responsibility
- limitations on direct contact with needy people
- supportive supervision
- enhancing feedback
- good communications
- positive attitudes on the part of both management and employees
- opportunities for new ideas
- limited job ambiguity

We know that as productivity increases

- absenteeism decreases
- turnover decreases
- moral is optimal

Obviously, the hiring of individuals with limited life skills or family problems contributes to organizational distress. However, it is the responsibility of the organization -- as well as the individual -- to try to alleviate negative factors affecting employee well-being and productivity, and make the quality of interaction between individual and organization more positive.

We hope you found this to be a useful resource. There's more where this came from!

This packet has been specially prepared by our Clearinghouse. Other Introductory Packets and materials are available. Resources in the Clearinghouse are organized around the following categories.

CLEARINGHOUSE CATEGORIES

Systemic Concerns

- Policy issues related to mental health in schools
- Mechanisms and procedures for program/service coordination
  - Collaborative Teams
  - School-community service linkages
  - Cross disciplinary training and interprofessional education
- Comprehensive, integrated programmatic approaches (as contrasted with fragmented, categorical, specialist oriented services)
- Issues related to working in rural, urban, and suburban areas
- Restructuring school support service
  - Systemic change strategies
  - Involving stakeholders in decisions
  - Staffing patterns
  - Financing
  - Evaluation, Quality Assurance
  - Legal Issues
- Professional standards
- Other System Topics: _____

Programs and Process Concerns:

- Clustering activities into a cohesive, programmatic approach
  - Support for transitions
  - Mental health education to enhance healthy development & prevent problems
  - Parent/home involvement
  - Enhancing classrooms to reduce referrals (including prereferral interventions)
  - Use of volunteers/trainees
  - Outreach to community
  - Crisis response
  - Crisis and violence prevention (including safe schools)
- Staff capacity building & support
  - Cultural competence
  - Minimizing burnout
- Interventions for student and family assistance
  - Screening/Assessment
  - Enhancing triage & ref. processes
  - Least Intervention Needed
  - Short-term student counseling
  - Family counseling and support
  - Case monitoring/management
  - Confidentiality
  - Record keeping and reporting
  - School-based Clinics
- Other program and process concerns: _____

Psychosocial Problems

- Drug/alcoh. abuse
- Depression/suicide
- Grief
- Dropout prevention
- Learning Problems
- Pregnancy prevention/support
- Eating problems (anorexia, bulim.)
- Physical/Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Gangs
- Self-esteem
- Relationship problems
- Anxiety
- Disabilities
- Gender and sexuality
- Reactions to chronic illness
- School Adjustment (including newcomer acculturation)
- Other Psychosocial problems: _____